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SUBJECT: INTER-SESSIONAL MEETING OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC
DEMOCRACY PARTNERSHIP

¶1. (U) SUMMARY. The ROKG (South Korea), current Chair of the Asia Pacific Democracy Partnership (APDP), hosted an inter-sessional meeting of APDP on the margins of the Community of Democracies Ministerial in Portugal on July 11. The ten governments represented received a briefing on APDP activities since last year's Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and discussed drafts of the APDP Mission Statement and Organizational Guidelines for Election Observation Missions. Participants agreed to continue working together through APDP to strengthen democratic institutions in the Asia Pacific region. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) As agreed at the APDP Senior Officials Meeting in Seoul in October 2008, the ROKG hosted an inter-sessional meeting on the margins of the Community of Democracies Ministerial Conference in Lisbon. The meeting was chaired by ROKG Deputy Foreign Minister Oh Joon and attended by representatives of Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and the United States. Christopher Camponovo, DRL Senior Advisor, and Michael Fuchs of S/P, represented the USG.

¶3. (U) Before the APDP Inter-Sessional Meeting, Oh Joon met with Acting DRL A/S Karen Stewart to exchange views on APDP and to discuss the upcoming meeting. During their breakfast, Oh Joon and Stewart discussed possibilities for who might take over the APDP Chair at the end of 2009. The ROKG has approached the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste, but none expressed interest, primarily due to previous commitments this year. As a result, Oh Joon stated that the ROKG is willing to continue as APDP Chair until Spring 2010, which will provide more time to find a successor and should minimize potential conflicts with other international meetings. Acting A/S Stewart indicated that we are appreciative of the ROKG's efforts as APDP Chair and that the USG will work with the ROKG to help find a new APDP Chair. She further expressed the USG's continuing commitment to APDP. Although the new Administration is reviewing all of the USG's democracy-promotion activities, we will continue our participation in APDP, in particular, through funding a joint APDP/Bali Democracy Forum workshop and by possibly contributing to APDP election observations in 2010.

¶4. (U) To begin the Inter-Sessional Meeting, the USG representative briefed participants on the APDP election

observation missions to Bangladesh (December 2008) and to the Federated States of Micronesia (March 2009). The participants agreed to invite both Bangladesh and the Federated States of Micronesia to participate in APDP. The USG also encouraged APDP participants to consider where APDP might send election observation missions in 2009 and 2010 and suggested two possibilities for 2010) the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Although no extended discussion followed this suggestion, in bilateral discussions after the meeting, several governments expressed interest in the proposal.

¶5. (U) Following the briefing, the participants discussed two draft documents prepared and reviewed by "virtual" working groups: an APDP Mission Statement and a set of Organizational Guidelines for APDP Election Observation Missions. After discussion of the Mission Statement, only one section remained in brackets) that which addresses any APDP member which "seriously fails to comply with one or several of the membership criteria." In particular, India raised concerns over the ability of one-third of APDP's membership to raise the issue of a member's non-compliance, noting the potential for divisive discussion and the provision's inconsistency with APDP's inclusive nature. With regard to the Organizational Guidelines, participants were comfortable with the document as revised to incorporate comments of the working groups and, accordingly, recommended that it be adopted at the next Senior Officials Meeting.

¶6. (U) As a final matter, the ROKG asked participants to consider assuming the rotating APDP Chair sometime during the

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first half of 2010, at which time the second SOM would take place. Although this issue was not resolved in Lisbon, the meeting successfully maintained the momentum necessary for APDP's future sustainability.

This cable was prepared by DRL Bureau.

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<http://www.intelink.sgov.gov/wiki/portal:portugal>
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